



Office of The Attorney General  
**State of Connecticut**

6399

**TESTIMONY OF  
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
BEFORE THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 24, 2009**

I appreciate the opportunity to support House Bill 6399, An Act Concerning Child Protection.

This legislation provides greater judicial oversight over efforts for reunification of children younger than 6 years, ensures more coordination between the probate courts and the superior courts when each court has a child protection matter and allows the judges who presided over a termination of parental rights of a child to also preside over the adoption of such child.

Child abuse and neglect is a tragic prevalent reality. My office represents the Department of Children and Families (DCF) in child protection cases, often a child must be either removed from the home or a court orders DCF services to attempt to keep the child with the family. Last year, attorneys in my office appeared in over 4,000 child protection court proceedings. House Bill 6399 has evolved from my office's experience with these cases.

In particular, this legislation:

1. ensures that DCF has authority to provide medical care to a child in the care and custody of the department through an order of temporary custody;
2. authorizes a child who reaches the age of eighteen to receive DCF services through the voluntary service program while in school and under the age of 22 years in order to provide continuity of such services until the child can live independently;
3. requires six month court review of children under the age of six in DCF care instead of a one year court review so that the court can make timely adjustments to services as necessary because especially for children under the age of six, a short period of time feels like a lifetime;
4. requires automatic transfer of a child custody case from Probate Court to the superior court upon placement of a child with DCF, allowing for all DCF matters to be consolidated in the superior court;
5. requires consolidation of a child neglect or abuse case in the superior court when a probate court case involving the same child is also pending. This measure clarifies the intent of the current law;

6. authorizes family relations court and staff access to DCF and juvenile court records involving a child who is involving in a family relations matters. There is often substantial overlap of cases where family relations staff are involved;
7. extends the process for authenticating records currently in place for hospitals to substance abuse providers so as to eliminate the need for such providers to appear in court to testify as to the authenticity of the records;
8. authorizes superior court adoptions when the child was originally before the superior court in a child protection matter and the adoption was part of the permanency plan and court order of termination of parental rights;
9. authorizes termination of parental rights of a child whose parent has non-accidentally killed or caused serious bodily injury to another child in the parent's custody;
10. clarifies the restrictions on admission of children's statements do not apply to child protection proceedings but rather only to juvenile delinquency proceedings. The intent of the statute is to limit children's statements in criminal and juvenile matters but the law may be interpreted to include child protection cases.

I urge the committee's favorable consideration of House Bill 6399.